

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15
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R 161214Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2696
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
DIA WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC
USCINCEUR

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 2435

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SY
SUBJECT: SYRIAN MEDIA SUMMARY FOR APRIL 15, 1977

1. VISIT OF SADAT EMISSARY HUSNI MUBARAK RECEIVED TOP MEDIA BILLING ALONG WITH VISITS OF PIERRE GEMAYEL AND JORDANIAN PRINCE HASSAN. BAATH HEADLINED: "MYBARAK CONVEYS TO PRESIDENT ASAD ORAL MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT SADAT. MUBARAK: 'ENCOUNTERS AND CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA ARE IN INTEREST OF OUR NATION.'" ARTICLE REPORTED MUBARAK BRIEFED ASAD ON RESULTS OF SADAT'S TALKS IN US, FRANCE AND WEST GERMANY.

2. GEMAYEL MET WITH ASAD AFTERNOON APRIL 14. ARTICLES REPORTED DISCUSSION CENTERED AROUND SITUATION IN SOUTH "AND UNCLASSIFIED

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MEANS FOR HANDLING IT IN ORDER TO FOIL ISRAEL'S AMBITIONS," AS WELL AS WAYS OF FURTHERING SYRO-LEBANESE COOPERATION. GEMAYEL TOLD SANA HAS TALKS WITH ASAD WERE "FRUITFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE." HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT ASAD WOULD GIVE GREAT CONCERN TO LEBANESE ISSUE DURING TALKS HE WILL CONDUCT WITH SOVIETS AND AMERICANS. HE DECLARED, "WE CONVINCED ASAD WILL BE PRINCIPAL

ADVOCATE TO UNDERTAKE DEFENSE OF THIS CAUSE." PRESS FURTHER REPORTED THAT GEMAYEL EARLIER HAD MET WITH FONMIN KHADDAM AND COL. AL-KHOULI. AFTER THIS MEETING, GEMAYEL STATED: "WE WERE IN AGREEMENT ON ISSUES WE DISCUSSED PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO WHAT IS CURRENTLY OCCURRING IN SOUTHERN LEBANON." GEMAYEL RETURNED TO BEIRUT SAME EVENING.

3. FRONT PAGE STORY APPEARED IN AL-BAATH CLAIMING THAT LEBANESE POLITICAL QUARTERS CONDEMNED ZIONIST THREATS MADE BY ENEMY FONMIN ALLON AND DESCRIBED THEM AS ATTEMPT TO STRIKE AT UNITY OF LEBANESE, STRESSING THAT THEY WILL BE DOOMED TO FAILURE THANKS TO CONSCIOUSNESS OF LEBANESE PEOPLE. ARTICLE CITED NEWS FROM WASHINGTON WHICH "INDICATES US WILL CAUTION ISRAEL AGAINST ANY ATTEMPT TO ESCALATE ME SITUATION."

4. LEAD EDITORIAL IN AL-BAATH BY AMID AL-KHULI ATTACKED RECENT ISRAELI STATEMENTS ON SOUTH LEBANON, TERMING THEM "THREATS" AND ARGUING THAT ISRAEL'S CONCERN FOR CHRISTIANS IN SOUTH LEBANON WAS MERELY SUBTERFUGE AIMED AT CONTINUING FIGHTING IN LEBANON AT EXPENSE OF BOTH CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS. HOW, KHULI DECLARED, "CAN ISRAEL'S 'COMPASSION' BE EXPLAINED AT TIME WHEN ISRAEL DEALING OUT TO CHRISTIANS IN OCCUPIED LAND HARSHTEST SORT OF PERSECUTION AND TORTURE IN ITS PRISONS AND WHILE IT INCARCERATES METROPOLITAN CAPPUCCI? IF ARAB CHRISTIANS OF LEBANON DO NOT FIND IN THEIR ARAB NATIONALISM THEIR PROTECTOR AND IF THEY DO NOT FIND IT IN THEIR LEBANESE HOMELAND, THEY WILL NOT FIND IT IN ZIONIST RACISM." HE CONCLUDED THAT DESPITE THREATS DIRECTED AGAINST SYRIA, UNCLASSIFIED

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DAMASCUS WOULD ACT ACCORDING TO ITS PAN-ARAB PRINCIPLES AND THE NEED TO RESTORE SECURITY TO LEBANON. COMMENT: COLUMN MUCH MORE EXPLICIT THAN NORMAL IN DISCUSSION ISRAEL'S COURTING OF SOUTH LEBANESE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. WHILE COLUMN DIRECTED AT RECENT ISRAELI STATEMENTS, ITS FRANKNESS SUGGESTS THAT SYRIA WISHES REASSURE CHRISTIANS OF ITS GOOD INTENTIONS WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY WARNING THEM OF DANGERS IF THEY PURSUE FURTHER COOPERATION WITH ISRAEL. END COMMENT.

5. COLUMN IN THAWRA URGED PARTICIPATION OF PLO AT GENEVA MEPC. COLUMNIST ASSERTED ISRAEL TRYING TO DISRUPT CONFERENCE BY CLAIMING READINESS TO DEAL WITH ANY PALESTINIANS OTHER THAN PLO. US SAID TO ALSO ADHERE TO THIS POLICY. COLUMNIST STATED GENEVA CONFERENCE FIVE MONTHS AWAY AND PREDICTED PERIOD WOULD BE USED FOR HIGH LEVEL EXCHANGES. HE CAUTIONED THAT GENEVA CONFERENCE WHILE IMPORTANT COULD NOT BE COUNTED UPON TO ACHIEVE RESULTS. HE CONCLUDED, "GENEVA CAN UNDOUBTEDLY BE POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR FRUITFUL ACTION IF OBJECTIVE CONDITION FOR ITS CONVENING EXIST. UNTIL THIS IS

ACHIEVED, ME PROBLEM WILL STAY WHERE IT IS."

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